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VOLUME XLIV | Autumn 1995 | NUMBER 2

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PUBLISHED BY *The Friends of the Columbia Libraries* | Two issues a year  
BUTLER LIBRARY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK, NY 10027



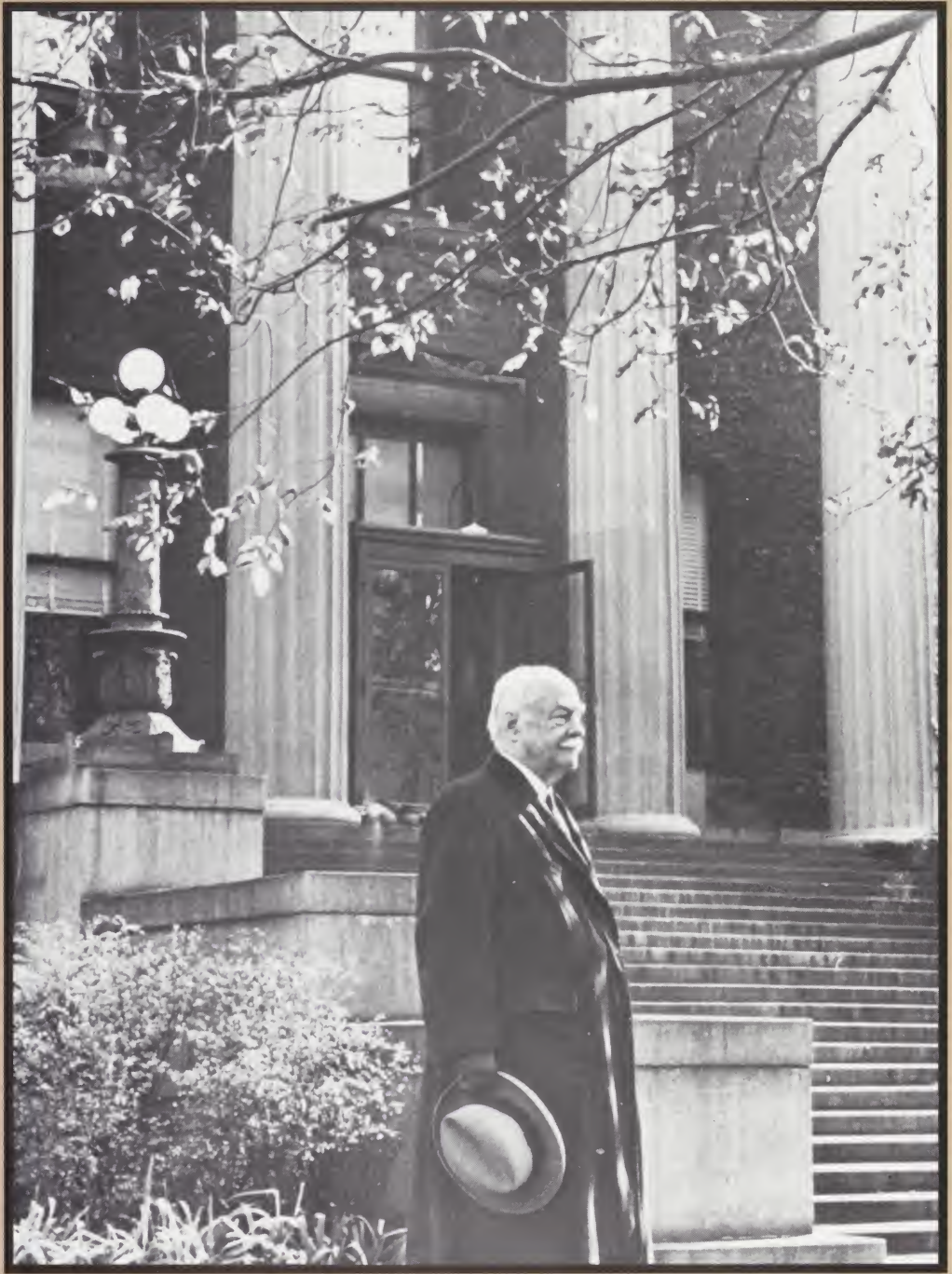
## *Columbia* | L I B R A R Y C O L U M N S

THE AUTUMN 1995 ISSUE | MICHAEL STOLLER, EDITOR

One hundred years ago, on December 7, 1895, Columbia laid the cornerstone of its first Morningside Heights building, Low Memorial Library. While no classes were held at the new location until 1897, this year nonetheless represents the centenary of Columbia's commitment to the Morningside campus and, in a sense, to all that the University would become in the century that followed.

Mindful of this anniversary, we devote the second issue of the new *Columbia Library Columns* to "things Columbia." Inevitably that must entail celebration of the centenary event itself—the design and construction of Low Library. An article by Barry Bergdoll chronicles the building's emergence from the minds of Charles Follen McKim and Seth Low, a product of their collective vision of the Morningside campus and of Low's vision for Columbia's future as a research university. A photo essay by Hollee Haswell chronicles the vision's realization in stone. And Michael Rosenthal's article on Nicholas Murray Butler describes the man who more than anyone else was responsible for the institutional realization of that vision. Finally John Stranges provides an edition of a brief correspondence between two important Columbians, George Louis Beer and James T. Shotwell, a snapshot of the Versailles Peace Conference's aftermath, and a view of the role Columbians played in the world at large.





Nicholas Murray Butler in front of Earl Hall, ca 1945. After he resigned as president, Butler visited the campus each day, weather permitting. Although his failing eyesight required that he be accompanied by a companion, his vision of Columbia never diminished. Columbiana Collection.

## *Nicholas Murray Butler: Captain of Erudition*

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL

The role played by the legendary “robber barons” in shaping American industrial society after the Civil War is by now a well-established part of our history. The Morgans, the Rockefellers, the Vanderbilts, the Carnegies, and their cohorts rest comfortably with their mythic status in the pantheon of major American figures. Ruthless, visionary, and powerful, these captains of industry built empires that, for better or worse, came to define much that is unique about America.

At roughly the same time (a little later, 1876, if we want to take the founding of Johns Hopkins as the starting point), another institution developed that was as distinctly American in its way as the steel, oil, and railway monopolies were in theirs: the modern research university. With the rapid transformation of colleges into research universities, a transformation that quickly eclipsed the German model on which these universities were originally based, there emerged a new species of industrialist—the industrialist of the mind—to preside over them. Contemptuously (if perceptively) branded by Thorstein Veblen as “captains of erudition,” university presidents were intellectual moguls, no less acquisitive than their capitalistic brethren, who ferreted among the wealthy for their resources and came to exercise vast cultural influence.

Of these academic empire builders, men like Gilman of Hopkins, Eliot of Harvard, White of Cornell, and Harper of Chicago, arguably the most visible and certainly the most enduring was Nicholas Murray Butler, who ruled Columbia University from 1901 to 1945. Astonishingly, Butler is the only one whose biography has never been written. In remedying this, I take as my subject a man whose importance is not simply a product of his lengthy tenure at Columbia, but of the fact that, in the process of creating a vast institution in his own image, he made himself into a powerful American cultural icon recognized and revered (and not infrequently reviled) throughout the world.

Butler's ambitions for himself were never parochially limited to Columbia. Nor were they national or even international in scope. They were finally nothing less than intergalactic. (In his autobiography, Lord Halifax expresses his amusement at the joke that Butler had indicated that he would not die until a vacancy had occurred in the Holy Trinity.) His choice of "Cosmos" as his pen name for some of the innumerable articles he wrote tells us more about Butler than he understood. Alva Johnson's summary of Butler in his 1930 *New Yorker* profile as "the only member of his profession—that of consulting world advisor and liaison officer of the nations; the grandmaster of internationalists (non-Red) of all countries; the most comprehensively decorated private individual extant; the semiofficial boss of American letters, the president of the most prestigious educational institution on earth," represents perhaps the most successful attempt we have to contain his immensity in a few phrases.

A book about Butler is necessarily a book about different kinds of power: the emerging power of the American research university, of the country itself, and of Butler's extraordinary skill in blending the two together and selling them, along with himself, to the world at large. Fascinating in their own right, Butler's vision and heroic excesses reveal much about America's sense of self and one of its most distinctive institutions as both came to dominance in the first half of this century.



If Butler is an obscure figure today, his least utterances and even his whereabouts were newsworthy in his time. His annual summer departures for Europe invariably merited a notice in the *New York Times*, and his arrivals were treated as important state occasions, whether in England, Germany, France, or Italy. He helped England through a parliamentary crisis by appearing at a secret Constitutional Conference, addressed the Reichstag, and was a member of the French Academy. Had he chosen to wear all his foreign decorations, even his capacious chest would have had trouble accommodating them at one time: Commander of the Order of the Red Eagle (with star) of Prussia; Grand Commander of the Royal Redeemer (First Class) from Greece; Serbia's Grand Cross of the Order of St. Sava (First Class); Grand Officer of the Order of Polonia Restituta (Second Class); Commander of the Order of the Saints and Lazarus from the Italian Government; Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor of France; Grand Cordon of the Order of Leopold from Belgium; and Grand White Cordon with red borders of the Order of Jade from China, to name a few.



When he wasn't chatting with emperors, popes, kings, revolutionaries (he once had lunch with Lenin), and dictators, or receiving medals from foreign countries and honorary degrees (thirty-eight in all) from universities both here and abroad (St. Andrews, Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, Louvain, Prague, Glasgow, Breslau, Strasbourg, Toronto, and Rome, among others), he was deeply involved in American politics. A friend of most Republican presidents from McKinley on, he helped draft party platforms, influenced foreign policy, and was engaged in formulating all manner of legislation, the most important of which, from his point of view, was his work on the National Budget Bill of 1920. "Nicholas Miraculous," as his good friend Teddy Roosevelt dubbed him, was asked to run (but declined) for mayor, governor (three times), and senator. When Taft's vice-presidential running mate suddenly died shortly before the 1912 election, Butler agreed to serve as a last-minute substitute on the ticket, no doubt deserving some of the credit for the eight electoral votes from Vermont and Utah that the two garnered.

He shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Jane Addams in 1931, served as president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for twenty years, and was chairman of the Carnegie Corporation from 1937 to 1945. He was a member of every conceivable committee and organization—and president of most of them—from the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia to the Final Jury to Pass upon Essays Submitted by High School Pupils in a contest sponsored by the International Business Machines Corporation.

In fact, more or less the only presidency he failed to achieve was that of the United States, and that for no lack of trying. Although his hatred of losing caused him later to disavow his ambition, he desperately sought the Republican nomination in 1920, actually managing to receive New York's 69 1/2 votes as a favorite son candidate at the convention. But not even his slogan, "Pic Nic for a picnic in November," or the assurance on his campaign buttons that "He's no pussy footer," could alter the party's conviction that the country was not ready for another university president to follow Wilson. It was a disappointment that rankled all his life, much as he attempted to deny it.

As an educational reformer, he helped purge the public school systems of both New York City and Paterson, New Jersey, of political cronyism. Under his leadership, efficiently run, centrally administered Boards of Education were voted into replace a corrupt system of local boards functioning under the strict rules of political patronage. Prior to becoming president of Columbia, Butler had already been one of the founders and the first president of what began as a teachers' training school and shortly became Columbia's Teachers College. Before and during the early years of his presidency, he worked hard to try to find some solution to the problem of unifying standards for college admission. His efforts culminated in the creation of the College Entrance Examination Board, which originated today's practice of requiring all applicants to college to take the same standardized test. In addition, he was president of the National Education Association and founder and editor of the *Educational Review*.

Add to these accomplishments the more than 5,000 items—speeches, papers, reviews, and books—that are listed in a bibliography compiled in 1934, and one gets a sense of just how prodigious a character Butler was. By no means the most modest of men, Butler gloried in the fact that as he grew heavy with years and honors his entry in *Who's Who in America* occupied more space than anybody else's. If importance were measured by sheer inches, none could readily compare. In 1942, for example, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, conceivably more significant even than Butler, could only muster 2  $\frac{7}{8}$  inches to Butler's 10  $\frac{3}{4}$ .



Butler's lengthy entry was not accidental: he monitored the public record of his achievements as more venal souls might the daily stock market listings. Nothing could be omitted, not his memberships in golf clubs—four—or the fact that in 1923 he became a member of the Bricklayers, Masons, and Plasterers Union of America. Had the *Guinness Book of World Records* existed during his lifetime, the 4,284-word sentence he generated in his 1943 presidential report would surely have been noted as the longest nonfictional sentence ever written. Butler's unwavering attention to the documentation of his career can perhaps best be seen in a note he wrote to his secretary in 1941, when he was seventy-nine: "Will you get from Mr. Hayden the exact description of the honor which the government of Venezuela is to confer upon me on Friday and add it to the list of items in your record and that furnished to *Who's Who*. It may be too late to get it into the 1942 *Who's Who* but I'm not sure." (It was.)

The platform for his various achievements, of course, was Columbia University, which he in large part built, funded, and ran as his own. It can be said about few institutions that they were as dependent for their development on the energies of one man as Columbia was on Butler. As a young professor he helped draft the blueprint by which Columbia would move from college to organized research university. As the first dean of the faculty of philosophy, he encouraged, or so he claimed, the purchase of land on Morningside Heights, urging the Trustees in fact to acquire all the land from 110th to 120th Streets and from Morningside Heights to the Hudson River.

In the process of shaping a university to his own grand specifications, Butler exercised a tight autocracy. He was insistent about attracting distinguished faculty to Columbia, and quick to dismiss them if they challenged his authority. The firings of faculty who persisted in arguing that the United States should stay out of World War I even after Butler had declared such assertions treasonous, is but one instance of many in the career of a man who felt comfortable with the notion that the university belonged to him.

The public adulation in which Butler wallowed as his career flourished was not the only response he provoked. From the start of his presidential tenure he was excoriated by critics objecting to his seemingly boundless egotism and administrative tyrannies, who viewed his ties to industry and finance as compromising the academic integrity of the university. In addition to Veblen's finding him the most pernicious form of the abhorrent species of university president, Upton Sinclair, in *The Goose Step*, saw Butler's Columbia as the prime instance of the malefic influence that the corporate board-



Nicholas Murray Butler at his desk in Low Library in the later years. Columbiana Collection.

room had come to play in university affairs. And Randolph Bourne, a Columbia graduate, pilloried Butler in a savage parody as Alexander Mackintosh Butcher. Perhaps the most amusing instance of Butler's capacity to inspire fierce antipathy was the "Draft Ode for a Phi Beta Kappa Occasion" published in *Poetry* magazine in 1939 by poet and classicist Rolf Humphries. Richly veined in classical allusion, the poem makes little sense until one reads vertically the first letter of each line, which spells out "Nicholas Murray Butler is a Horses Ass."

Outraged at having been duped, *Poetry* castigated Humphries in the next issue for his "scurrilous phrase" and disbarred him from ever appearing again in its pages. (The sentence was eventually rescinded, Humphries later admitted.)

But whatever the nature of the particular judgment, everyone recognized Butler as the emblematic presence of American higher education. Writers as dissimilar as Aldous Huxley, Sinclair Lewis, and H. Allan Smith treated him as the quintessential American academic. Referring to the

extent to which Butler was encrusted with honors, H. G. Wells called him the “pearly king of academics.” Ezra Pound, who considered him “one of the more loathsome figures of a time that has not been creditable even to humanity,” nevertheless acknowledged him as the “titular head of the country’s intellectual life.” Good or bad, he was someone to be reckoned with.

Butler’s own view of himself and his importance is perhaps best caught on a small typewritten chart located in a file labeled “Personal Odds and Ends.” Most likely the product of a self-indulgent reverie which he had spawned in an idle moment some time in 1940, its frighteningly revealing calculation had no doubt been typed into permanent form by a dutiful secretary:

	<i>Mussolini</i>	<i>Stalin</i>	<i>Hitler</i>	<i>Roosevelt</i>	<i>NMB</i>
Born	1883	1879	1889	1882	1862
Come to Power	1922	1924	1933	1933	1902
Years in Power	18	16	7	7	38
Age	<u>57</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>78</u>
Total	3880	3880	3880	3880	3880
Divided by 2	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940

The company Butler chooses for himself here emphasizes the enormous distance he traveled from his warnings, bestowed upon his Columbia classmates in his 1882 Class Day Address, against the evils of overweening ambition: “Let us then keep steadily before us,” he concluded, “the motto of the ancient sage—‘not too far . . .’—and rest content with the satisfactory attainment of a reasonable ambition as our ideal of human happiness.”

While it is perfectly reasonable—and even appropriate—that Butler’s critics point out the

dimensions of his narcissism and his patrician indifference to process, it is also critical that these be seen in the context of his own vast aspirations for himself and the university he was building. In our current age of diminished expectation, in which we have accommodated ourselves to the flawed nature of all our institutions, educational as well as governmental, it is astonishing to encounter Butler’s monumental vision of what he hoped to achieve. At a dinner honoring him on his seventy-fifth birthday, Butler emphasized the dreams he always had for Morningside Heights:

What was in my mind, and is in my mind still, is that Morningside Heights shall become the greatest capital of the mind that the world has ever seen—either ancient or modern—and that from

it there shall go out to every part of this land and to every foreign land a steady and heartening stream of influence and inspiration in every field of thought and endeavor.

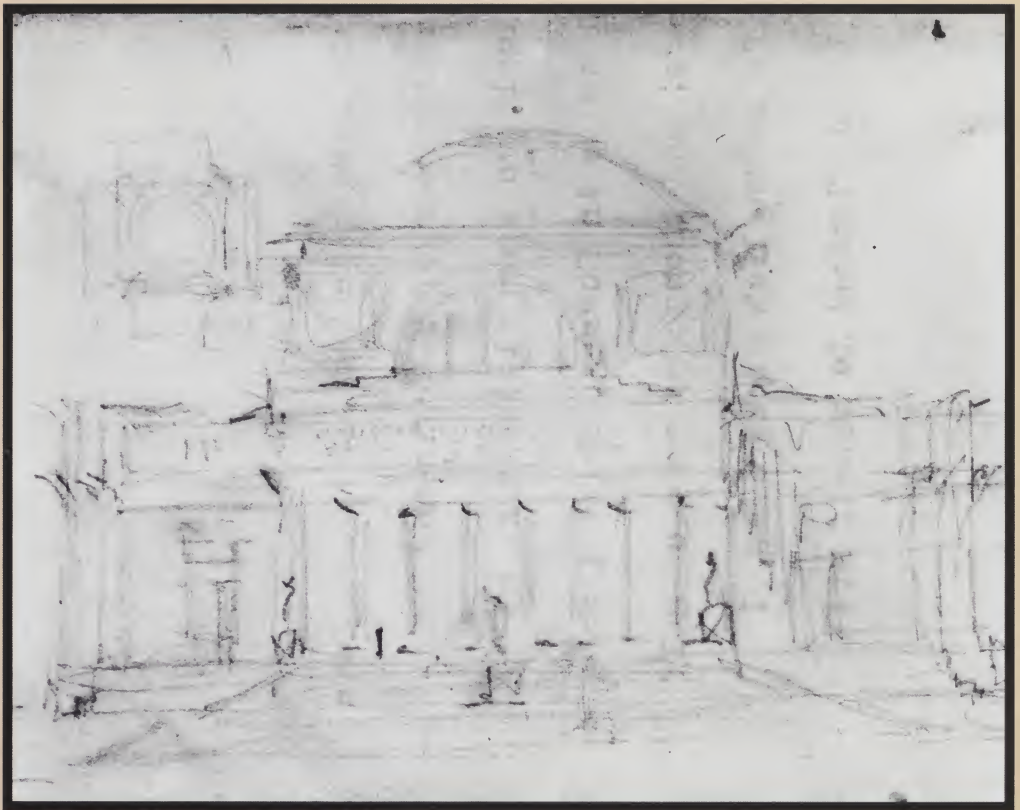
However implausible such a notion, it was Butler’s ability to articulate it that accounts in part for Columbia’s greatness as a modern university. It also speaks to a time in which an implacable ambition such as his could be entertained. Butler’s quest for power, control, and influence make him one with his friends Andrew Carnegie and J. P.



Morgan. He too sought an empire, and understood as well as any man the growing power of the research university as a defining social and cultural institution in a country that was poised to take over world leadership. It is particularly interesting in this regard that Morgan (or so Butler alleged), no doubt sensing the kinship between them, offered Butler the presidency of the Erie railroad. (Controlling an empire that was arguably more influential even than Morgan's, however, Butler was not overly tempted to trade in his cultural capital for railroad shares.)

Extolling Butler on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, his friend Charles D. Hilles pointed out that "It is indispensable that a man, to become great or famous, shall represent in a well-defined way the general aspirations of his times." Butler's life perfectly illustrates the correctness of Hilles' claim. In all of his idiosyncrasy, Butler is at the same time a wonderfully representative figure of the first half of our century. Rediscovering for this age the complex career of a man whose importance was explicitly understood by his contemporaries should help us better understand the character of the age that nourished him.





Design sketch for elevation of Low Library, on verso of page 2 of a letter from McKim to Stanford White, dated 24 July 1894. In the letter McKim states he must cancel his trip to meet White in London(?) because of the amount of work President Low has laid out for him (while Low is on vacation). Drawings and Archives. Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library.

## *Laying the Cornerstone* of the New Columbia University (Library)

December 7, 1895

BARRY BERGDOLL

Any city that hopes to be famous, in the sense that Athens was famous and is famous still, must crown its material success with an intellectual life powerful within its limits and beyond its borders.

Seth Low, 1900<sup>1</sup>

Long before President Seth Low made his dramatic announcement in 1895 of his intent to donate the one million dollars required for a library building on the “Morningside Acropolis,”<sup>2</sup> he had made the building his own in private meetings, letters, and phone conversations with “his” architect, Charles Follen McKim. During the summer of 1894 the design took shape in an interchange between Columbia’s first nonacademic president and America’s champion of academic architecture. Together Low and McKim designed a new library that would be one of the most admired buildings in American architecture for over a generation.<sup>3</sup> They also stamped the future shape and image of the University for the next century. The cornerstone, laid on December 7, 1895, was more than the first stone of a new library building. It was a reinvention of the library in the academic life of the University, the keystone of the new campus, and the capstone of Low’s ambition to transform Columbia College into Columbia University in the City of New York.

Since the mid-1850s a portion of the faculty had advocated elevating Columbia from a college to a university, a semantic change that represented the corporation's metamorphosis from a parochial training ground for New York's elite into a research institution with a self-conscious metropolitan duty.<sup>4</sup> Thomas Bender has recently argued persuasively that the Trustees endorsed this new role for Columbia in the city's life when they selected businessman and former Brooklyn Mayor Seth Low (class of 1870) as a new breed of university president in 1890.<sup>5</sup> Low was conscious of the perils facing a nonacademic at the head of an institution proud of its tradition and its adherence to the classical curriculum. But he was dedicated to a vision of the University, which he was intent upon crafting into a unified family of faculties capable of rivaling the great German universities American educators increasingly admired. The founding of the University Council in 1890 was the first step in an administrative centralization of Columbia. This and the new name for his alma mater, "Columbia University in the City of New York," were great sources of pride for Low. The creation of the new campus crowned by a library bearing his father's name was to consolidate these reforms.

The story of Columbia's decision to abandon its cramped midtown campus at 49th Street and Madison Avenue for the more spacious and verdant grounds of the Bloomingdale Asylum is well known.<sup>6</sup> In late spring of 1892 the Trustees solicited the advice of three prominent New York architects on planning the new site, determined that the campus should grow by reason rather than the ad hoc necessity that had reigned at the 49th Street site. The "commission" of Charles Coolidge

Haight, Richard Morris Hunt, and Charles Follen McKim (who represented the firm of McKim, Mead & White) echoed the tensions within the faculty and Trustees between advocates of the classical curriculum and those endorsing Columbia's movement toward the modern research university modeled on Johns Hopkins and the elective system of Charles Norton Elliot's Harvard. Haight, who had designed the brick Victorian Gothic buildings at 49th Street, represented tradition. He proposed a cloistered approach to the new site, allowing him to expand on the collegiate associations of his Gothic and complement the Romanesque design recently selected for the cathedral of St. John the Divine.<sup>7</sup> Both Hunt and McKim had trained at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts*. In 1892 they were immersed in designing aspects of the World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago, viewed then and ever since as the seminal moment in America's adaptation of the classical rhetoric and the large-scale, formal planning of *Beaux-Arts France*. Hunt proposed a unified scheme for the Morningside Heights campus with a large central courtyard, combining the unimpeachable logic of French hospital planning with the monumental grandeur of Chicago's Court of Honor. McKim too proposed a formal courtyard arrangement but with a vital difference: his complex featured a great open courtyard facing south to 116th Street, the whole landscaped to take advantage of the rise on the site with its magnificent views south towards the city and west to the Hudson. The courtyards were to create a strict hierarchy of buildings designed with "pure classical forms, as expressing in the simplest and most monumental way the purposes to which the buildings are devoted," and with strict attention to the

“wholly municipal character of the problem.”<sup>8</sup> McKim thereby adapted the grand public and civic imagery of Chicago to the uses of a private college inching its way toward university status.

The Trustees entrusted the three plans to Professor Ware, doyen of Columbia’s School of Architecture, and to Frederick Law Olmsted, whose most recent designs included the grounds of the U.S. Capitol and the World’s Columbian Exhibition. Ware and Olmsted drew up a composite master plan and a list of program requirements they hoped Haight, Hunt, and McKim would use to develop model elevations and solve the thorny question of the proper style for Columbia—Gothic or classical. The Trustees were quick to note that, “in attempting the Gothic we shall at once appear to be imitating the English universities, and shall thereby suggest a comparison which can scarcely fail to be unfavorable to us.”<sup>9</sup> As to the classical, the Trustees noted that “the present tendency in architecture in this country seems to be to develop in this direction” and that, therefore, “it is the style which will appeal most strongly to educated popular taste, and will be most likely to secure an imposing architectural effect.”<sup>10</sup>

But the three architects refused to continue working together. The Trustees then moved to appoint McKim. While this was reasoned out as a foregone conclusion—Haight’s Gothic had been rejected and Hunt’s declining health was all too apparent—it is likely that McKim had already cemented a relationship with Seth Low. The president was such an astute negotiator that the minutes of the Board of Trustees in these years make the design of the campus seem a corporate affair. Low involved both the committees and the

Trustees to be sure, but he was also adroit at educating them in his vision of the University and the instrumental role the new buildings would have in realizing that vision. McKim in turn educated Low, who returned from the World’s Columbian Exhibition in Chicago enthusiastic for the civic virtues of an Americanized Beaux-Arts classicism.<sup>11</sup>



McKim was, indeed, perfectly suited to win Low’s confidence. He had academic credentials—a year at Harvard’s Lawrence Scientific School and three at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts—and his firm, McKim, Mead & White, was a prototype of the great corporate practices of the twentieth century. McKim had already shown his commitment to Columbia’s young School of Architecture, most dramatically by his donation in 1889 of \$20,000 to endow the McKim Traveling Fellowships.<sup>12</sup> Low found in McKim a fellow believer in the responsibility of America’s cultural elite to build institutions through private philanthropy.

In turn McKim solicited Low’s help. As his vision of an American Academy in Rome took shape, he solicited Low’s support for this center of classical studies. And in June 1893 he requested an honorary degree for Daniel Burnham “in view of his public services as Director of Works of the Columbian exhibition.”<sup>13</sup> It seemed likely the new campus would be designed by a number of like-minded architects who agreed on certain guidelines: uniform cornice lines, a consistent attitude toward style and image, and a clearly defined hierarchy of spaces, functions, and materials. These were the principles of the Chicago Exhibition’s so-called “White City” as defined by Burnham and refined by a cohort of Beaux-Arts trained



American architects. It was a vision of urban scale planning that coincided brilliantly with Low's vision of the engaged, metropolitan university.

In April 1894 the Trustees approved McKim's master plan for the campus. It retained the great open south court—McKim called it alternatively Columbia's "vestibule" or "atrium"—with a library closing the view atop a high flight of steps. A second court would be closed at the north by a multi-functional building combining dining hall, academic theater, and gymnasium.<sup>14</sup> On the cross axis the Library would be flanked by a chapel on the east and a student assembly hall on the west, each of which had an apse protruding into two rectangular "quadrangles" parallel to the avenues and enclosed by the academic "pavilions." The campus as we know it was essentially defined.

Over the course of the summer the plan was studied further, and by the time it was presented to the Trustees in the fall, only one key element had been radically transformed: the Library at the center. At their October meeting the Trustees approved without apparent discussion a resolution: "That the shape of the library building be changed from a long rectangle to a Greek cross."<sup>15</sup> As Low later made clear he was determined that the University Library be an utterly original creation. The rectangular footprint was too close in conception to McKim's much acclaimed design for the Boston Public Library. By becoming more emphatically freestanding the new building would be the focal point of the campus and would stand in distinct contrast to the rectilinear academic buildings. The change was momentous, for the building was transformed from a vaguely defined rectangle to a monumental, centrally planned structure—something not

seen on an American campus since Jefferson's designs for the University of Virginia and Jean-Jacques Ramée's for Union College.



In any case, McKim worked on the Library through the summer of 1894. On July 6 he wrote to Mead: "The scheme for the Library has undergone many changes. Last week we struck it...." On July 24 he was obliged to write Stanford White that he could not join him in Europe on "the delightful journey you laid out for me," since "President Low announced his determination to take a vacation of several weeks and at the same time cut out for me such a lot of work that it simply [has] made my proposed trip out of the question."<sup>16</sup> On the back of that letter, now in the Avery Library, is the first known sketch for the centrally planned, Pantheon-inspired library.<sup>17</sup> McKim conceived a domed building—perhaps influenced by Low's continual insistence on the unity of the University—and one whose clear homage to the Roman Pantheon is unmistakable, corrected with the high dome profile of Hunt's Administration Building at the Columbian Exhibition.

Like any Beaux-Arts trained architect, McKim defined for himself in this preliminary sketch the essence of the problem he wanted to solve architecturally: how to give Columbia the aura of antiquity and the more commanding, domed profile for a grand public building in the modern city. McKim's dome would command not only a grand and unified campus, but also the emerging monumental landscape of Morningside Heights, where the dome of Grant's Tomb and the lantern of St. Luke's hospital were already rising and the great towers and dome of St. John the Divine were projected.<sup>18</sup> Over a year earlier he had written to



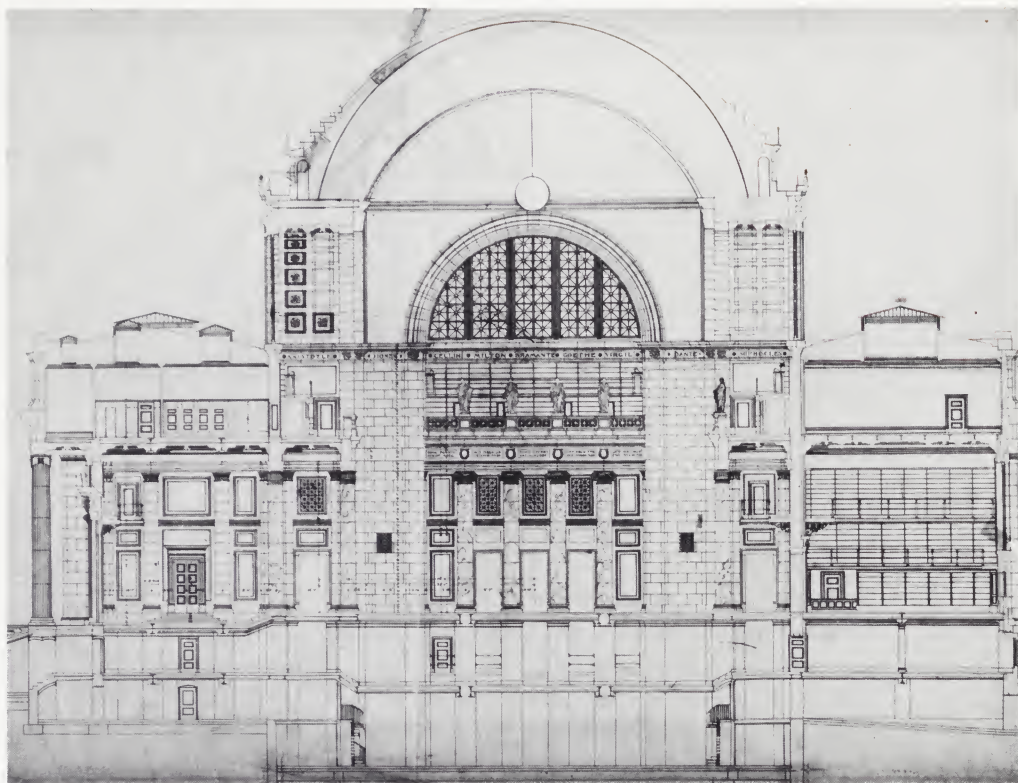
Olmsted that the rise of the center of Columbia's new site was "the crowning feature of the island" with its "commanding view ... of the Palisades to the Narrows, and over both rivers, no problem could be more admirably suited to monumental treatment."<sup>19</sup>

While McKim was eager to develop a Library of the grandest simplicity, Low wondered aloud if the "faculty buildings" should not be ornamented so as to appease the Trustees, who were still unsure of Columbia's new scale and imagery. "I note what you say in regard to the Faculty buildings and appreciate the importance of winning over the Gothic gentlemen of your committee in all legitimate ways," McKim wrote back on September 8, 1894. "My experience, however, teaches me that their reasoning is as medieval as their taste, and I honestly believe that the right way is not to sugar-coat our exteriors with compromising features but to meet the problem fairly and squarely in the face as we have, under your leadership hitherto done."<sup>20</sup> By October Low was anticipating McKim in his drive for simplicity and grandeur. Writing to McKim of "our plans" and the admiration of the Library "by all who see it," Low warned McKim: "I am afraid you are allowing your sense of the ornate to dominate you too much. No one of the other buildings seem to me to have the fine simplicity of the Library."<sup>21</sup> McKim fired back a gleeful response to his client and pupil in monumental design: "To make these buildings akin to the Library in design, of course would be to accomplish the most consistent, and therefore the most perfect result."<sup>22</sup> Low now encouraged McKim to focus his energies: "Our wisdom, at the moment, is to stick to the Library, inasmuch as that practically carries with it the style and everything else."<sup>23</sup>

Low developed a strategy with McKim to win approval for the new buildings from the Trustees at their October meeting. McKim had a vast, plaster model of the campus made and supervised working drawings of the Library so that construction could begin as soon as the design was approved. McKim had won over first Low and then the Trustees to the great paved vestibule, scaled, as McKim explained, not to the Library alone but "to the whole University system," and inspired by the system of terraces and landscaping at the World's Columbian Exhibition.<sup>24</sup>



The plans were accepted on November 7, 1894. Meanwhile Low asked McKim to work on alternatives for building in marble, limestone, or a mixture of brick and limestone. Estimates in hand, Low was arming himself for his great surprise, which would come near the end of the academic year. When the cornerstone of the Low Memorial Library was laid a year later, Low realized he had indeed laid the cornerstone of the whole university system, not only architecturally, but philosophically and philanthropically as well. The building would be of limestone rather than marble, for as Low admitted, "My personal relations to the building are such that I should be sorry to see it made so costly as to compel the Trustees to supplement my own gift."<sup>25</sup> Rather, his building was to set the pattern for what the press of the day called "the new philanthropy" of "The Age of Generosity," the gift of named buildings. It took adroit advantage of a change in New York laws in 1893 that protected the intentions of donors in bequests and charitable donations.<sup>26</sup> Low's one million dollar gift—unprecedented even in an age of escalating philanthropy—was



Low Library, longitudinal section, 6 March 1895. Drawn by van der Bent (acc. no. 1977.002.00013). Drawings and Archives. Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library.

front page news for days in the New York press. The president set the process in motion, and his fellow Trustee, Schermerhorn, immediately seconded with a gift of \$300,000 for the first of the academic pavilions, that for the natural sciences.

Both Low and McKim understood the vital role monumental architecture had to play in making the new University a reality. To the Trustees Low explained over and over again that only a daring investment in the original buildings would attract

donors, as well as students. From a trip to Europe, where he measured the stylobate, or pedestal, of the Parthenon, McKim wrote back to reassure Low of the design of the great platform on which the Low Memorial Library would be displayed: "As you can imagine I have studied the subject of platforms wherever I have gone with eager curiosity and without venturing any bold comparisons I look more than ever confidently to the development of yours as a pedestal upon which the

University may rely for popular as well as actual support.”<sup>27</sup> He went on to reassure him that with time his gift would pay off with further gifts and reminded him that the downturn of the economy in the mid-1890s required patience.

Equally the new building was to set the pattern for the curriculum and the interaction between disciplines that Low envisioned as the greatest advantage of the university system. With his tireless urging the Trustees discussed a new undergraduate curriculum in which the uniform classical course of study was adapted to the growing demand for scientific instruction and specialized knowledge. It might seem ironic that even as Columbia built itself a monumental, classical campus, it finally took the leap of abandoning Greek as an admission requirement. However, Low Library was not intended to cement Columbia to antiquity but rather to unify the pantheon of departments into a single university. The new curriculum, adopted in January 1896 to go into effect with the move to the new site, made this clear:

...no one can obtain the degree of Bachelor of Arts who does not know something of at least one ancient language, and who has not therefore looked out through that window into the world of antiquity. He must know, also, something of history, something of philosophy, something of political economy, a good deal of English, something of mathematics, and something of at least one natural science. He must also have a reading knowledge of both French and German. This is the norm for every student.<sup>28</sup>

As the building rose, it increasingly appeared to Low to provide the opportunity to assure the success of that curricular ideal.

The key came with the reorganization of the Library from a collection of books into the working center of education. As Low explained, the scientific faculties would be housed in buildings especially configured according to their needs around laboratories, scientific collections, and departmental libraries. In the fashion of the great German universities, the centerpiece would be the Library, which “besides being used as a general library, is treated as the laboratory of those faculties whose implements of work are books alone.”<sup>29</sup>



The library-as-laboratory was especially clear in the combination of the grand circular reading room primarily for the undergraduates—with access to a reference collection in stacks surrounding the rotunda and the entire collection via up-to-date pneumatic paging systems—and a series of specialized reading rooms. These included imposing spaces for the Law School and the Avery Architectural Libraries, later moved to McKim-designed libraries on the ground floors of Avery and Kent Halls. But most significantly, on the upper floors there was to be a carefully integrated system of seminar rooms within the book stacks. These would allow each discipline to have both private study areas and areas for seminar classes immediately adjacent to the appropriate part of the Library’s growing collections. Indeed, when Low Library first opened, the *University Quarterly* reported that “This great building, which stands in the center of the University group, shelters under its capacious roof not only the University Library, but the libraries, lecture halls and offices of three of the great University Schools.”<sup>30</sup>



Low's conviction that his new library building could both memorialize his image of the University and reinforce its curriculum was played out in his attempt, ultimately defeated by the Trustees, to cover the building with inscriptions inside and out. Once again McKim took the lead. He associated the architecture of a modern library with programmatic inscriptions such as those Henri Labrouste had carved on the facade of his seminal *Bibliothèque Sainte-Genève* in Paris (1838–50), the inspiration for his own Boston Public Library (1887–95). In late winter of 1896 McKim informed Low that inscriptions had to be designed for the great attic over the main Ionic portico, the friezes crowning the second floor of the other three facades, and the panels over the four ground floor entrances in the angles of the Greek cross. This was a matter of some urgency, as by summer the scaffolding would be coming down and McKim considered the College Library incomplete without inscribed names. Low rebuffed him—"In all future communications, please describe this building as the Columbia University Library"—but promised to turn his attention to the challenge.<sup>31</sup>

During the summer months in Maine Low worked on devising a scheme of inscriptions that could fit the space available and function both as individual inscriptions and as a larger narrative. In August he sent his ambitious scheme to McKim: "I propose that the Frieze and the small panels in the angles will be used to epitomize the history of the University, by indicating the historical development of its parts."<sup>32</sup> Over the attic a long text would recount Columbia's growth from King's College to Columbia University. On the side

facades the friezes and panels would cite the various components of the University and their dates of foundation. The individual faculties were to be placed in relationship to their positions in the evolving campus master plan. The most notable gesture was reserved for the panel over the Southeast entrance, where Low proposed to commemorate the creation of the University Council by which he had organized Columbia into a university even before the official adoption of the name. This, he explained, would point towards the quadrant of the master plan where the College, "which has been the seed out of which the University has grown," would take up residence.



These inscriptions proved to be the most controversial issue of the entire design reviewed by the Trustees. One member called the scheme "radically wrong" and quipped, "The space ought to be created for the inscriptions, not the inscriptions for the space."<sup>33</sup> He suggested they should be rendered in Latin, a proposal firmly rejected by Low as anti-populist. When the inscriptions on the inside were carved—Law, Theology, Medicine, and Philosophy on the great piers supporting the dome—they were in fact placed to coordinate the physical placements of the new University faculties with the traditional division of knowledge. But the specific history Low sought to celebrate on the exterior was flatly rejected with the exception of the long text in the attic about the College's origins and the utterly uncontroversial "The Library of Columbia University" in the principle frieze. All other spaces were left blank for future discussion.

The building was far from finished when classes began on Morningside Heights on Monday, October 4, 1897. Summer 1897 had been passed in a frenetic rhythm of telegrams between Low in Maine and McKim in New York. On the “sets of plans ... for your own personal use”<sup>34</sup> that McKim had provided, Low and his wife reviewed every detail from the ventilation and the all-important lighting to the decorative details, including the installation of the bronze Zodiac in the vestibule floor. Work would continue well into 1898 even as the Library was occupied by an expanding population of administrators, faculty, and students.

But Low took time off from the ceremonies on October 4, 1897, to dictate a letter of appreciation to McKim—one of three letters he wrote to his architect that day:

I avail of this opportunity to tell you how more than delighted both Mrs. Low and I are with this building. It is finer than we had dreamed it would be, even when we first returned to the city this autumn. Mr. Pine [a Trustee] said to me this morning that he thought it was really one of the great buildings of the world. Mrs. Low and I share that feeling most cordially. I congratulate you upon the outcome with all my heart. I have realized very fully for many months that your interest in the building was not simply that of the architect in his creation, but that there was on your part the personal interest in it of friend for friend.<sup>35</sup>

Low and McKim’s visions had come to coincide to an extraordinary degree. McKim’s concept of a heroic, American classicism, heir both to Rome and to the Parisian Ecole des Beaux-Arts, fell into harmony with Low’s notion that a grandiose civic image could craft an international university out of a local college. Both Low and McKim viewed the entire scheme as a personal triumph.



<sup>1</sup> Seth Low, “The University and the City,” *Columbia University Quarterly* 3 (1900): 13. Although the documentation for this article is drawn from the rich collection of materials concerning Low Library in Central Files, Columbiana Library, and the archives of Avery Library, I am indebted to the earlier research of Francesco Passanti, to the advice of Andrew Dolkart, to the assistance of Hollee Haswell and Rhea Pliakis, and to the work of my Columbia and Barnard College students, in particular to Zachary Levy, in a seminar on campus architecture that laid the groundwork for an exhibition to be held in the Wallach Gallery of the Department of Art History and Archaeology in autumn 1997 to mark the centennial of Columbia’s move to Morningside Heights.

<sup>2</sup> “The Morningside Acropolis” (Editorial), *Columbia University Quarterly* 2 (1900): 149.

<sup>3</sup> A 1900 survey of the architectural profession noted that over 70 percent of architects placed Low Library on a list of the “ten most beautiful buildings in the United States,” cited in “A Beautiful Building,” *Columbia University Quarterly* 2 (1900): 150.

<sup>4</sup> On the role of Samuel Ruggles, who had taken a strong stance against sectarianism and articulated the case of academic freedom and a commitment to research, see Richard Hofstadter, *Academic Freedom in the Age of the College* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 269–74.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Bender, *New York Intellect: A History of Intellectual Life in New York City from 1750 to the Beginnings of Our Own Time* (New York: Knopf, 1987), esp. 265ff. On Low’s political career and his anti-Tweed politics, see the serviceable work by Gerald Kurland, *Seth Low: The Reformer in an Urban and Industrial Age* (New York: Twayne, 1971).

<sup>6</sup> The story is of course recounted in the standard histories of the University, such as John W. Robson, *A Guide to Columbia University with some account of its history and*



*traditions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), and is brilliantly analyzed in both Francesco Passanti, "The Design of Columbia in the 1890s: McKim and His Client," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 34 (1977): 69–84, and Leland Roth, *McKim, Mead & White: Architects* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 184–95.

<sup>7</sup> Haight indeed represented Columbia's "Episcopal connection"; later he designed the General Theological Seminary in Chelsea. As Francesco Passanti first noticed (Passanti, "The Design of Columbia," 71 n. 8), Haight's plan drew not a little on the recently adopted double-cloister plan of the new University of Chicago.

<sup>8</sup> McKim to Low, 18 April 1893, quoted in Passanti, "The Design of Columbia," 72.

<sup>9</sup> *Report of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds in Relation to the New Site*, printed report bound with the Trustees' Minutes. Columbia University. University Archives. Office of the Secretary of the University. Minutes of the Trustees of Columbia College. November 11, 1893, vol. 14 (1893–94).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 10–11.

<sup>11</sup> Low wrote about it enthusiastically: see Seth Low, "The World's Columbian Exposition," *The Columbia Literary Magazine* II (1893): 1–5.

<sup>12</sup> These are discussed in C. B. Moore, *The Life and Times of Charles Follen McKim* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929), 128, and by Steven Bedford in *The Making of an Architect, 1881–1981*, ed. Richard Oliver (New York: Rizzoli, 1981), 34. On tensions between Ware and Low's vision of the School of Architecture, see Richard Plunz, "Reflections on Ware, Hamlin, McKim, and the Politics of History on the Cusp of Historicism," in *The History of History in American Schools of Architecture, 1865–1975*, Gwendolyn Wright and Janet Parks (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1990), 53–72.

<sup>13</sup> McKim to Low, 5 June 1893. Columbia University. Office of the President. Central Files.

<sup>14</sup> "University Hall," which straddled the great retaining wall separating the heart of the campus from the lower, northern end (or "green") was never finished, despite elaborate negotiations for its design which preoccupied McKim for much of the late 1890s. Its lower level—the gym and boiler house—are today the foundations of Uris Hall.

<sup>15</sup> Columbia University. University Archives. Office of the Secretary of the University. Minutes of the Trustees of Columbia College. October 4, 1894, vol. 15 (1894–95).

<sup>16</sup> McKim to Mead, date unknown, McKim, Mead & White Papers, Library of Congress, quoted in Passanti, "The Design of Columbia," 76 n. 18; McKim to White, 24 July 1894, Stanford White Papers, Avery Library, vol. 10:17 (M), Dr. 35.

<sup>17</sup> Indeed McKim was opening a dialogue with White. For during those same months White was at work on the new campus for New York University at University Heights in the Bronx, where the centerpiece was to be a centrally planned library flanked by academic pavilions. The difference in the sensibility between the two men was apparent from the first sketches.

<sup>18</sup> This line of thinking is made abundantly clear by McKim's friend and Columbia architecture instructor A.D.F. Hamlin, "The Modern Dome," *School of Mines Quarterly* 18 (1897): 109–119.

<sup>19</sup> McKim to Olmsted, date unknown, McKim collection, Library of Congress, quoted in Moore, *The Life and Times of Charles Follen McKim*, 264.

<sup>20</sup> McKim to Low, 8 September 1894. Columbia University. Office of the President. Central Files.

<sup>21</sup> Low to McKim, 13 October 1894. Columbia University. Office of the President. Central Files.

<sup>22</sup> McKim to Low, 16 October 1894. Columbia University. Office of the President. Central Files.

<sup>23</sup> Low to McKim, 13 October 1894. Columbia University. Office of the President. Central Files.

<sup>24</sup> "Now, as at Chicago, the key-note to the solution of the Columbia site exists in the development of the terrace system and the consequent resulting court on the south, by means of which the center of the plot is immediately brought into contact with 116th Street." McKim to Low, 7 December 1894. Columbia University. Office of the President. Central Files.

<sup>25</sup> Low to McKim, 20 May 1895. Columbia University. Office of the President. Central Files.

<sup>26</sup> On the change in the law, see Bender, *New York Intellect*, 280–81. The rubrics come from an article printed in *The Dial* shortly after Low's announcement and contained in a file of clippings on Low's gift in Columbiana Library.

<sup>27</sup> McKim to Low, handwritten letter dated London, 6 April 1896. Columbia University. Office of the President. Central Files.

<sup>28</sup> *A New Curriculum for the School of Arts. Adopted by the Faculty, January 24, 1896. To go into effect July 1, 1897*, printed report bound with the Trustees' Minutes. Columbia University. University Archives. Office of the Secretary of the University. Minutes of the Trustees of Columbia College, vol. 16 (1895–96).

<sup>29</sup> From the pamphlet *Columbia University* (1897): 3, printed on the occasion of the University's taking up residence at the new site. There are two copies of this pamphlet in Columbiana Library. This image of the library-as-laboratory might well have come from the

Librarian, James Canfield, who used it in numerous reports of the period and expanded upon it at some length in his article "The Library," *Columbia University Quarterly* 2 (1900), 101–107.

<sup>30</sup> *Columbia University Quarterly* 1 (1898–99): 136. The seminar room idea is explained in Russell Sturgis, ed., *A Dictionary of Architecture and Building* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), vol. 3, col. 480, which also contains a detailed description of the Avery Architectural Library within Low Library. Photographs of the seminar rooms were published in Canfield, "The Library," facing page 104, and in *Library Planning, Bookstacks and Shelving with Contributions from the Architects' and Librarians' Points of View* (Jersey City, NJ: The Snead & Company Iron Works, Inc., 1915), 149.

<sup>31</sup> Low to McKim, Mead, and White, 14 February 1896. Columbia University. Office of the President. Central Files.

<sup>32</sup> Low to McKim, from Northeast Harbor, Maine, 24 August 1896. Columbia University. Office of the President. Central Files.

<sup>33</sup> Rives to McKim, undated letter, August 1896. Columbia University. Office of the President. Central Files.

<sup>34</sup> McKim to Low, 10 June 1895. Columbia University. Office of the President. Central Files.

<sup>35</sup> Low to McKim, 4 October 1897. Columbia University. Office of the President. Central Files.





# *Low Memorial Library:*

*The Building of a Great University*

HOLLEE HASWELL

Silent as a majestic sailing ship our days pass, the pace seemingly regulated by us. As we race to the end of a century it is fitting that we pause to reflect upon the work of previous generations and celebrate their enduring gifts. Without reflection our current decade might easily pass with no notice of cause for celebration.

In 1891, since Columbia College had already outgrown the Park Place and the 49th Street campuses, the Trustees of Columbia College decided to purchase the property of the Bloomingdale Asylum, 116th to 120th Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue. The Trustees wisely decided against taking the monies for this purchase from the College's already incumbered funds. Two million dollars was raised, not with great ease, from wealthy benefactors, citizens of New York, and alumni. Once the property was secured, a plan for use of the Asylum buildings was proposed but never executed. New buildings were needed.

On May 6, 1895, at the regular Trustees meeting President Seth Low made the following announcement:

*It was a favorite saying with my father, the late Abiel Abbot Low, that “commerce is the handmaid of civilization.” As a memorial of him, a merchant who taught his son to value the things for which Columbia College stands, I propose, if the Trustees consent, to cooperate with the College in the construction of the new University Library ... I will undertake to give to the College ... a sum equal to the cost of the Library, up to but not exceeding \$1,000,000...*

Newspaper accounts of the day called Columbia lucky and the gift noble, magnificent, princely. Seth Low, then age forty-five, was commended and thanked for the wisdom of his choice no less heartily than for his munificence.

We pause to think about the ideals brought forth, maintained, cherished, and given to generations from this place; to reflect on the technical skill, craftsmanship, artistry, and labor which in two short years, 1895–97, brought forth the first buildings on the Morningside Heights campus. A decade of centennial celebrations has already begun.







*15 September 1895.* Already the equal-length arms of the Greek cross of Low Library's floor plan emerge from the site. The glass top of the Bloomingdale Asylum greenhouse appears through the distant trees. The first permanent Columbia building, the powerhouse, is located off to the left, out of the photograph. Columbiana Collection.



*7 December 1895.* Laying of the cornerstone. Surrounded by members of the Board of Trustees, Seth Low is third from the left in the front row. Out of respect for Low's father this was a solemn occasion with no fanfare. Making his gift without solicitation and as a memorial, Seth Low made certain that neither his name nor the sum of the gift was mentioned at this ceremony. In addition only the name of his father, Abiel Abbot Low, appears in the dedication, found in the foyer floor at the main entrance. Columbiana Collection.

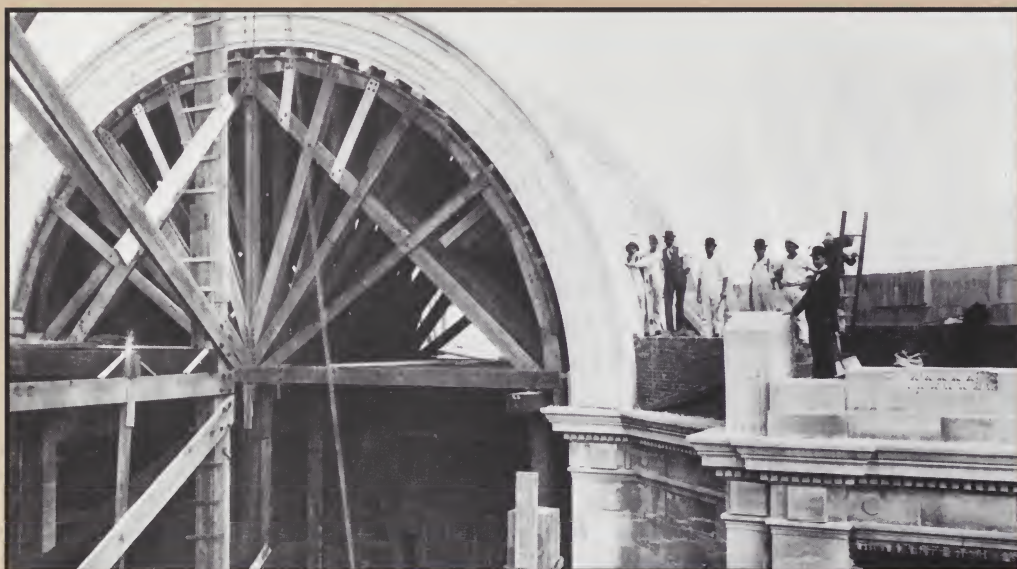


*3 July 1896.* The winter of 1895 was comparatively mild with little or no snow. The following July was hot, humid, and wet—but this did not hinder construction. Pausing briefly for this early morning photograph, the workmen bring form to what would be the most photographed vista on campus. Columbian Collection.

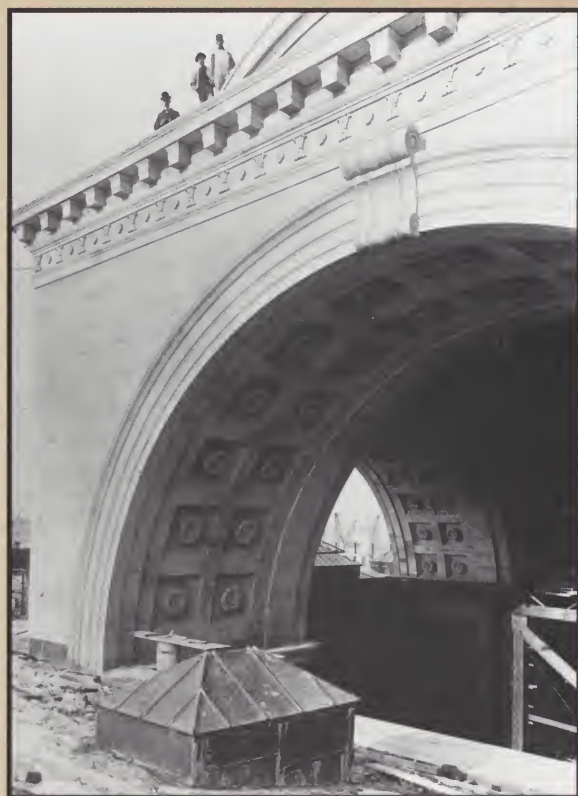


*19 September 1896.* Similar to the arches of ancient bridges and aquaducts, the massive vault spans the distance between the supporting piers. Columbian Collection.





*Above: 1 October 1896. With the keystone in place—no small achievement—one can feel the pride of the accomplishment. Architect Charles Follen McKim appears to be on the right in the derby. Columbiana Collection.*



*Left: 21 December 1896. Grant's tomb is framed by the arch of the west vault. The open spaces stand ready to hold the clerestory windows that will light the main reading room of the Rotunda. Columbiana Collection.*



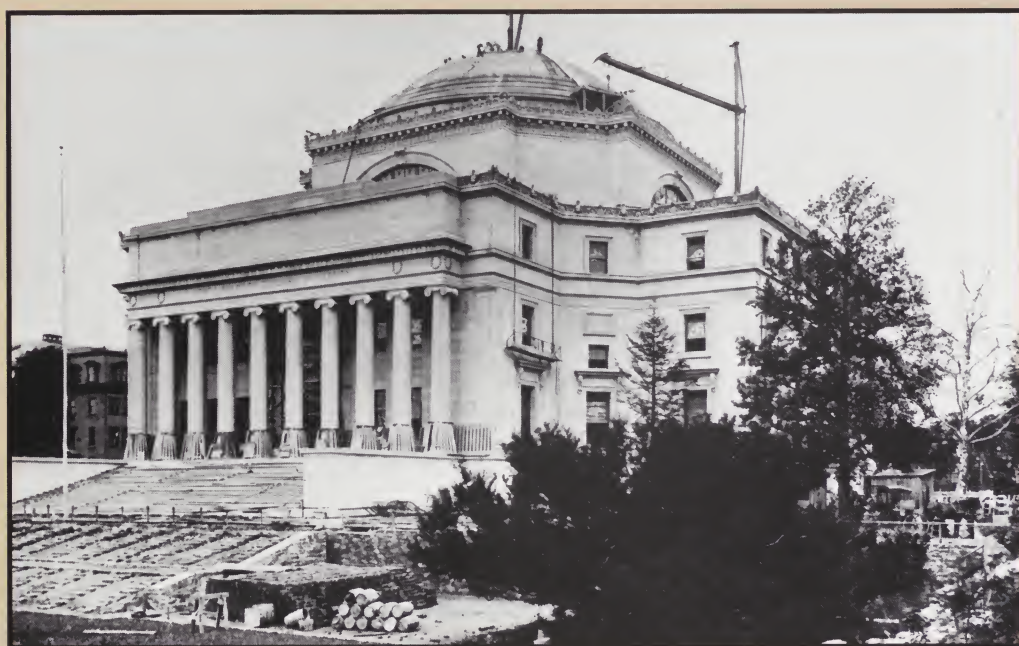
*Left: 10 May 1897.* As the damp spring progresses to a very wet summer, unknown artisans sculpt the laurel wreaths beneath the parapet inside the Rotunda. Columbiana Collection.

*Below: 18 June 1897.* Sophocles, Demosthenes, Euripides and Augustus Caesar, two-dimensional cartoons, poise as stand-ins where the heroic-size sculptures would be placed. In all, sixteen statues were planned. Only these four have stood guard over the Rotunda for a century. Sophocles and Euripides exchanged places when the sculptures were installed. Columbiana Collection.

*Facing page, above: 23 June 1897.* Gaslights dot the curb along the south side of 116th Street. On the north side, beyond the work shed, the mansard roof of a Bloomingdale Asylum building is visible through the trees. Willing hands of local youths steady the brake, as the workmen prepare the massive pink granite slab to be moved into place on the plaza before the magnificent new library. The only place where his name appears on the campus, this slab is the signature stone of the architect, Charles Follen McKim. It lies, centrally located, in the midst of the structures and campus he designed. Columbiana Collection.







*Above: 10 June 1897.* In less than four months from the taking of this photograph, Low Memorial Library would be ready for opening day, 4 October 1897. West Hall of the Bloomingdale Asylum is to the left, as is the new Engineering building under construction. Columbiana Collection.

## *George Louis Beer: Letters to a Friend, December 1919*

JOHN B. STRANGES

When he wrote two letters to James T. Shotwell in December 1919, George Louis Beer did not know that he had only three months to live. He had returned to New York from the Paris Peace Conference in November physically and emotionally exhausted. Yet, he was grateful for having been a part of such a historic event. President Woodrow Wilson and Colonel Edward House, Wilson's confidant, had included him not only in the group of academic and other specialists called together to help prepare the United States for the Peace Conference but in the even more selective American Commission to Negotiate Peace, the group that accompanied Wilson to Versailles in December 1918.

On the commission, Beer held the position of chief of the Colonial Division, a title that amused him somewhat, given that the United States had neither a colonial office nor extensive experience in the administration of colonies. At Versailles, Beer was the American member of the committee charged with drawing up the mandates under which the former German colonies and the territories taken from Turkey were to be admin-

istered by the victorious powers. Beer soon managed to gain the trust of important members of the British, French, and Italian delegations, and became one of the few insiders whose influence rivaled that of some of the foreign ministers of the major Allied powers. Shotwell, comparing his own “rather desultory” work at Versailles on international labor legislation with that of Beer, had written to his wife in January 1919 that “Beer is really playing a very important role. He was in a position to do what I could never have got through. He is in the secret sessions, and I see him after each one, and we talk of the weather. He is really quite discreet.”

Beer was already well-known as a prize-winning historian and a commentator on British-American relations, when the United States entered World War I in April 1917. From the outbreak of the war in Europe in August 1914, Beer abruptly shifted his interest from British colonial policy before the American Revolution to the promotion of British-American cooperation during the current crisis and thereafter. He never considered himself a propagandist; rather, he believed that the long-standing antagonism between Britain and the United States had begun out of a historical misunderstanding of the British colonial system and the subsequent willingness of American politicians to “twist the lion’s tail” whenever it suited them.

Like many historians of his day, he thought he had reached his conclusions “scientifically,” that is, through the most rigorous examination and interpretation of original documents. Then, at Versailles, he saw the opportunity for the two great English-speaking nations to serve as trustees of the native peoples of Africa and the Middle East committed to their care. Lord Milner, his British coun-

terpart at Versailles, considered Beer one of the few Americans who understood the sincerity and complexity of modern British imperialism. Indeed, there were great risks and responsibilities assumed by the mandatory powers as they assisted less developed regions toward eventual self-governance. Beer refused to embrace the American tendency to idealize small nations. Small nations threatened petty wars and petty wars could quickly become great ones. These were the practical consequences of excessive concern for sovereignty. Besides, the League of Nations would ensure that the mandatory powers adhere to the terms of their mandates. It all made sense to Beer, regardless of what the critics of British imperialism or the new mandate system might say.



The Covenant of the League of Nations that emerged from Versailles was not exactly what Beer had in mind. It failed, mainly, to include a provision for automatically recurring conferences to deal with specific issues, such as the arms and alcohol trade in Africa and the atrocities in the Belgian Congo. For Beer, the conferences were more important than the idea of a world parliament, which would soon experience either the problem of minor countries blocking action or domination by the major powers. Shortcomings notwithstanding, the League was still the agency to extend the principles of British-American civilization to the obscure corners of the world.

Sir Eric Drummond, first secretary general of the League, wasted no time in appointing Beer as commissioner of the mandate section of the League. A renowned scholar, a man of affairs who had successfully managed his father’s tobacco



importing business for ten years after his graduation from Columbia in 1892, a patriot firmly in support of American intervention in 1917 despite his father's origins in Hamburg, Germany, a statesman who understood the sometimes painful but unavoidable steps of undeveloped regions from colony to independence, Beer seemed a natural choice. He accepted the appointment despite his hatred of bureaucracy and his removal from historical scholarship and his beloved library. A return to teaching was not practical, for despite having held the title of Prize Lecturer in European History for a time at Columbia, he had not been a particularly successful instructor following his graduate studies there, as both he and some of his colleagues acknowledged.

Beer wanted to play a role, large or small, in helping the United States and the British Commonwealth to appreciate the power of their common tradition, language, and culture not only

to defend their own civilization but also to support and protect those who would aspire to similar ideals. Hence, the attack on the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations in particular in the United States from both the left and the right made him deeply pessimistic. A realistic man, Beer had always tried to prepare himself for life's failures, but the events leading to the defeat of the Treaty and the League were a heavy burden to body and spirit.

I discovered the following letters during my doctoral research on James T. Shotwell, when Shotwell's younger daughter, Helen, gave me access to her father's private correspondence. Helen Shotwell insisted that, of her father's many distinguished friends, George Louis Beer was among the most trusted and admired. Knowing my own admiration for both her father and Beer, she subsequently asked me to accept the letters as a poignant reminder of the two men's friendship.



329 West 71st Street • New York • December 1, 1919

*Dear Shotwell:*

Some days ago I met the Hobsons at dinner and learned that you were occupying their house. This prompted me to ask for the address and suggested sending you these lines. Since I saw you last I have done very little work or even thinking and, as a result, am gradually rounding into shape again. I am afraid that the past five years have taken a good deal out of me and that I can never again work so hard and steadily as I did. But possibly the fact that I am not even yet quite up to the mark is due to a somewhat pessimistic interpretation of the future. When gloom settled over us in Paris I sometimes thought that our forebodings were intensified by our physical condition, but every day now makes me more firmly convinced that the job was an increasingly poorly executed one. The only hope is in the League of Nations and the attitude of the Senate makes that hope a rather slim one. I had expected to sail last week on the "Mauritania" in order to prepare some matters for the Council of the League but at the last moment I canceled my passage on account of the situation in Washington. At the moment I have no idea when I shall leave, if at all.



It looks quite possible now that the fight over ratification will proceed for months and that it may be injected into the presidential campaign. The Republicans, as I am informed, will insist upon the passage by majority vote of drastic reservations. In that event the Democrats will defeat the entire treaty upon the final vote and make this the issue in the presidential election. If this should take place it would be calamitous. I am even afraid that the League idea itself would be abandoned, temporarily at least. The people don't seem to realize that however inadequate and even unsatisfactory the Treaty is, the alternative implied in its rejection is infinitely worse.

Under these circumstances, until it is quite clear that we are going to participate in the League and assume our share of the world's obligations, I have decided not to take up my job in the League. In the meanwhile, I do not feel like starting on any new work even though I have just today finished getting my papers and books in order.

I have also become more and more sceptical about the entire project of writing a detailed history of the Peace Conference. The settlement is far from completed and it simply can't be written at this time. I always had serious doubts as to the feasibility and wisdom of this Curtisian project and they have grown rapidly the past weeks. I intend to write to Temperley very shortly, but should be very much obliged to you if you would look him up and discuss this matter with him. His address is care of Hodder & Stoughton.<sup>1</sup>

Since my return from the advisor-desks about three weeks ago, I have been busy preparing for my departure and then canceling the arrangements. Hence, I have not seen many people beyond those immediately interested in the new developments in Washington, such as House, Auchincloss, Miller, Warrin, Fosdick, etc. I intend, now that I have time, to run up to Columbia and see how the men there feel.<sup>2</sup> Of course, I have seen Altschul who naturally inquired about you.<sup>3</sup> I could not give him very satisfactory information as you were a most illusive person last August and no one knew your whereabouts. Let me hear what you are doing and what your plans are. With best regards to Mrs. Shotwell and the young ladies, I am, as ever,

*Most cordially yours,*  
*George Louis Beer*



329 West 71st Street • New York • December 16, 1919

*Dear Shotwell:*

Many thanks for your two letters which arrived a week or so ago within a day of one another. The mails are still irregular to remind us that the world is still badly out of joint. In the first place, I want to scold you for worrying at all about the checks. There was absolutely no hurry and I hope that you have not in any way inconvenienced yourself in sending them to me. I am glad that you have some hope of collecting from the London S.W.

I am rather pessimistic about the future and, in my opinion, the Senate has aggravated the mess. What the outcome is to be as far as we are concerned I don't see. Everything at Washington is topsy-turvy as, since Wilson's illness, there has been no leadership whatsoever. House was up till last week in New York and presumably is still there. Wilson, so Fosdick tells me, does not even know that he is in America. They did not tell him, fearing that the shock would be too great. For the past few days I think that I can perceive some rays of light in Washington

and the possibility of our ratifying the Treaty early next year. If we don't do so, I foresee all sorts of evils on the continent of Europe, even to its decomposition which would poison America as well.

I am remaining quietly in my study until I know positively what we are going to do. In the meanwhile, I am quite lazy which is partly due to ill health and partly to a conviction that nearly all writing and speaking are at the moment futile. As I had promised Temperley I sent him 10,000 words or so on the colonial settlement and am also beginning to get a volume on the whole question of tropical Africa ready. So I am not quite consistent. But one has to keep busy somehow or another.

My ill health is mainly the consequence of an internal derangement which the physician assures me will disappear under a rigid and quite obnoxious diet. It is rather disagreeable. As a consequence of this and of my general pessimism, I have gone out of my way to avoid seeing people. I had a surfeit of talk in Paris.

I have heard from Young in connection with his contribution to Curtis' ponderous four volume epitaph on the Peace Conference. Haskins and Lord are to read papers on the Western and Eastern frontier settlements of Germany at the AHA [American Historical Association] meeting. Notestein got A.F. Whyte of the *New Europe* on the programme also. Simkhovitch refuses to discuss the world situation at all and urged me to retire to my study and to forget all about it and write of the past. I see Altschul occasionally and he always enquires after you. Tomorrow he gives a lunch for Max Lazard, whom I have seen several times. He did well, I am told, at the Labor Conference. The Press virtually ignored its doings. Bowman, I am told, was recently in Europe in connection with the Peace Conference.<sup>4</sup>

I am not quite happy about the indefiniteness of my future, as I should like to settle down to one thing or another, but I am much worried about Gray. If we don't go into the League, I don't see why there should be any Americans in the Secretariat. Drummond is not opposed to having them, but the Council will have to pass on this question; and when they see, as the London Times says, 12,000 officers in London alone looking for work, it seems to me that they are in duty bound to favor their own nationals. I do not know whether Gray returned with Polk or remained in Paris.<sup>5</sup> He wrote a pathetic letter to me, but I really don't know what I can do under the circumstances. At all events, Gray is not lighting candles in front of Lodge's statue. I was somewhat cheered of the possibility of your giving him some work for the Carnegie Endowment. What he wants and, I think, deserves, is a permanent job.

I am glad that you are so comfortably settled and that your work is progressing so satisfactorily. I am looking forward to seeing the programme when you get it ready.

I am lunching with Croly tomorrow to discuss what is to be done with the Treaty now. I have a shrewd suspicion that the *New Republic* crowd is now sorry that they worked for the rejection of the Treaty.<sup>6</sup> As you know, I am far from pleased with it but the alternative to acceptance is infinitely worse than all its imperfections. The radicals have played into the hands of the ultra-conservatives and, in my opinion, if the League does not go into effect now, we shall never see during our lifetime another practical attempt in this direction. We are headed for the imperfect League or for a period of international anarchy of indefinite duration and full of strife and wars. I see no possibility of amending the Covenant in a sense satisfactory to Radicals, Liberals and genuine internationalists. It would have no chance whatsoever in the U.S.A. Hence I am not working for any such changes for in this instance clearly "le meilleur est l'ennemi du bien" [the best is the enemy of the good]. If we ratify the Treaty, the driving force of the League and nearly all its honesty and unselfishness will be contributed by the British

Commonwealth and the U.S.A. If we hold aloof, it will be an empty shell and I am afraid, further, that the economic necessities of Europe and the desire for security against Germany will lead to measures that will drive a wedge deep between us and the British Commonwealth. Excuse the dogmatic tone of this last paragraph. It embodies only some of my fears and — hopes, and I wanted to get them off before I was called to dinner too often.

Will you give Mrs. Shotwell and the young ladies my best regards and good wishes for the holidays and the coming year and retain a good measure yourself.

*Most Cordially,*  
*George Louis Beer*



Beer died, at age 47, on March 15, 1920. Four days later, the Treaty of Versailles was put to its fourth and final vote in the Senate, where it failed to receive the two-thirds majority necessary for ratification. The United States, of course, did not join the League of Nations, and as Beer had foreseen, the world headed “for a period of international anarchy of indefinite duration and full of strife and wars.” However, no one can say with assurance that the presence of the United States in the League of Nations would have prevented Japanese and then German threats to world peace in the 1930s.

Beer represented the convictions and prejudices of many of his contemporaries about the progress of civilization. He had, as his friend Lord Milner said of him, “a strong sense of the duty which the more advanced nations owe to the more backward.” Yet he saw no moral dilemma between the “duty” of the advanced nations and the aspirations of those whom they governed. A man of immense goodwill and generosity, although never naïve, Beer could only hope, as he would say, that “in the fullness of time” the United

States, now the greatest of the English-speaking nations, would exercise the role it was destined to play in fixing a broken world.



<sup>1</sup> Beer refers to H.W.V. Temperley, distinguished British historian, decorated war veteran, and member of the British delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. By 1924, Temperley had edited a six-volume *History of the Peace Conference of Paris*.

<sup>2</sup> Beer lists a group of people who were involved in either the preparation of U.S. proposals for the Peace Conference or the negotiation and drafting of the Treaty itself. Colonel Edward M. House, President Wilson’s confidant and personal ambassador, was the leader of the group. Gordon Auchincloss, House’s son-in-law, served as assistant to the counselor in the State Department. David Hunter Miller, a New York lawyer and partner of Auchincloss, served as legal advisor to House and had drafted many of the provisions of the Treaty. Frank Warrin, also a New York lawyer, was Miller’s assistant. Raymond Fosdick, a lawyer and diplomat, had represented the U.S. War Department in France before his appointment as first under-secretary general of the League of Nations in 1919. Fosdick resigned this position early in 1920, when it became clear that the United States would not join the League.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Altschul was a prominent New York financier and well-known critic of German militarism.

<sup>4</sup> The reference here is to an additional group of specialists, drawn mainly from leading U.S. universities, who played a significant part in developing and advancing American proposals at the Peace Conference. Allyn Young, professor of economics and finance at Cornell, was the chief U.S. economist at the Peace Conference. Charles Haskins, professor of history at Harvard, was the U.S. specialist on Western Europe. Robert Lord, also professor of history at Harvard, was the American expert on Poland and Czechoslovakia. Wallace Notestein, professor of history at the University of Minnesota, was the specialist on Alsace-Lorraine. Alexander Frederick Whyte was the editor of *The New Europe*. He had been special correspondent for *The Daily News* at the Versailles Conference. Vladimir Simkhovitch, professor of eco-

nomic history at Columbia, was the American expert on Russia. Isaiah Bowman, the director of the American Geographical Society, was the chief territorial expert and executive officer of the American specialists, known collectively and unofficially as the "Inquiry."

Max Lazard, a member of a wealthy and famous French banking family, had been a student at Columbia before the war. As a member of the French delegation to the Peace Conference, he was an advocate of progressive international labor legislation.

<sup>5</sup> Lewis H. Gray, an instructor in Indo-European languages at Princeton before the war, was the U.S. specialist on the Near East and Caucasus region. Frank Polk was the counselor of the U.S. State Department.

<sup>6</sup> Herbert Croly was the editor of *The New Republic* and a prominent spokesman for progressive causes.



## Our Growing Collections

### THE RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY

*Barzun gift:* Professor Emeritus Jacques Barzun (A.B., 1927; A.M., 1928; Ph.D., 1932) added to his collection thirty-two volumes of literary works and a group of nearly 1,400 papers and documents, which include personal, professional, and family correspondence, manuscripts, proofs, and other materials relating to his long career as a teacher, writer, and editor.

*Boychuk gift:* Nine boxes of books, manuscripts, and printed materials were donated to the Bakhmeteff Archive of Russian and East European History and Culture by Bohdan Boychuk, a Ukrainian-American poet. Mr. Boychuk was a founding member of the New York Group of Ukrainian Poets, whose archives were also added to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library this year (see *Ukrainian poetry gift* below).

*Freese gift:* Mr. William Freese donated nine letters from the eminent jurist Benjamin Cardozo written to him, to Mrs. Freese, and to the Committee on Admissions of the Association of the Bar of New York.

*Haverstick gift:* Iola Haverstick (A.B., 1946; A.M., 1965) added to her many gifts to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library inscribed copies of *The Collected Stories of Louis Auchincloss* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994) and Carol Gelderman's biography, *Louis Auchincloss: A Writer's Life* (New York: Crown, 1993), as well as two fine editions of Edith Wharton works, *In Morocco* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920) and *The Book of the Homeless*, number 25 of a limited edition printed by the Merrymount Press and signed by D. B. Updike. The latter, edited by Mrs. Wharton, is an illustrated collection of poetry and fiction created in 1916 by an international group of well-known artists and writers for the benefit of the American Hostels for Refugees and the Children of Flanders Rescue Committee.

*Hertz gift:* David Bendel Hertz (B.S., 1940; Ph.D., 1949) gave to the Library a two-volume first edition of John Evelyn's diaries (1818), with an additional bound-in letter from Evelyn.

*Kamitchis gift:* Clyde Kamitchis donated a seventeenth-century French manuscript entitled "Tratté de Physique," apparently in the hand of the philosopher and mathematician Jacques Rohault (1620–1675), a member of Descartes' circle. Rohault's writings on Cartesian physics were widely read in a contemporary English translation.

*Karpovich gift:* Along with much personal and professional correspondence with such figures as Harry S. Truman, John F. Kennedy, and Isaiah Berlin, Serge Karpovich donated a collection of clippings, research materials, and lecture notes from his years as a member of the Harvard University faculty.

*Kelly gift:* Jerry Kelly, a distinguished printer and book designer, donated a copy of his own publication, *Aeneas in the World of the Dead*, translated by G. K. Richards ([New York]: Kelly/Winterton Press, 1990), for use in the Core Curriculum exhibition, *In Pursuit of Meaning*.

*Knudson gift:* Jerry Knudson enriched Columbia's collection of Herbert Matthews papers by the addition of several letters written by Mr. Matthews to him, along with additional related material.

*Lohf gift:* Kenneth A. Lohf (A.M., 1950; M.S., 1952) donated thirty-three volumes of fiction, poetry, and literary biography to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library this year. Of particular interest are scarce issues of World War II British periodicals, e.g., *Transformation* [1], 4, 1943 and *Salamander* (Cairo), 4–5, ca 1944, as well as several

volumes of English poetry dating from the years immediately following World War II, among them Laurie Lee's *The Bloom of Candles* (London: John Lehmann, 1947), Ronald Bottrall's *Farewell and Welcome: Poems* (London: PL: Editions Poetry London, 1945), and Edith Sitwell's *The Shadow of Cain* (London: John Lehmann, 1947). Mr. Lohf also added a letter to Seamus O'Sullivan, dated March 8, 1808 to the Arthur J. Symons collection he established several years ago.

*Momjian gift:* An amusing letter from Columbia College President F.A.P. Barnard to a Mr. Joseph Stanford Brown, January 8, 1880, was donated by Marc A. Momjian (B.A., 1983; LL.B., 1986). In it, President Barnard reports on the failure of the system of cloakroom management that had been instituted against his advice a few months earlier.

*Page gift:* Mrs. Elizabeth Page donated to the Library first editions of six novels by Dawn Powell and a 1921 manuscript letter from Powell to her sisters, which describes at length the birth of her son John at St. Luke's Hospital. Powell's manuscripts and diaries, currently on deposit at Columbia, provide an incisive and hilarious commentary on New York literary life in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s and on the disillusioned writers from middle America who gave it character.

*Palmer gift:* Among the recent gifts of Paul Palmer (M.S., 1950; A.M., 1955) were twenty-one signed photographs of Broadway and Hollywood actors and singers, including Lawrence Tibbett, Ray Milland, Madeleine Carroll, George Brent, Warner Baxter, and Joseph Cotton. These images add to the many theatrical portraits in the Brander Matthews Dramatic Museum collection.

*Protiss gift:* Daphne and Dorothea Protiss, in memory of Paul P. Protiss and Peter Paul Protiss, donated a substantial collection of papers by and relating to the French writer Henri Jules-Bois (1871–1943). Jules-Bois—a friend of Rodin, Huysmans, Edward Arlington Robinson, and John Jay Chapman, among others—fled from France before World War II and taught at Columbia. Among his many books on psychology, philosophy, supernaturalism, and the occult were *Le Satanisme et la Magie* (1895), *LEternel Retour* (1914), *La Douleur D'Aimer* (1896), and *LEve Nouvelle* (1897).

*Raskin gift:* Mrs. Marjorie Raskin donated to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library the papers and research notes of her late husband, the *New York Times* reporter and labor analyst A. H. Raskin. The large collection includes Mr. Raskin's notes, correspondence, manuscripts of his books, and drafts of his articles for the *Times* and other newspapers. Among the correspondents are Adolph A. Berle, Hubert Humphrey, David Dubinsky, and Adolph Ochs Sulzberger.

*Francis Rigney gift:* Mr. Rigney added to the Frederick L. Hoffman papers a typescript entitled "Lectures on Race Pathology and Anthropometry at Yale University, 1916."

*Rothkopf gift:* Forty-two works of fiction were added to the collection by Carol A. Rothkopf (A.M., 1952), a longtime Rare Book and Manuscript Library donor. Among them were a group of inscribed Elmore Leonard novels, works by John Mortimer, and six early editions of Arnold Bennett.

*Schaeffler gift:* Dr. Samuel Schaeffler and Mrs. Schaeffler once again extended their generosity to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. This year's donations comprised a John McBey lithographic etching of a World War I battleground entitled "AVAS" and dated 1917; a very large and rare watercolor of a "Tass" window poster (No. 1027, Moscow, 1944); two nineteenth-century pamphlets dealing with early land speculation in California; and two lithographic posters, ca 1930, advertising the *Saturday Evening Post*.

*Schapiro gift:* University Professor Emeritus Meyer Schapiro added to his papers an important group of letters from his former student Whittaker Chambers.

*Schreiber gift:* Fred and Ellen Schreiber generously donated three pages from Sebastian Brant's edition of Vergil's *Opera* (Strassburg, Grüninger, 1502). The pages were used in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library exhibition *In Pursuit of Meaning: Classic Texts from Columbia's Core Curriculum* to illustrate the use of contemporaneous images in the illustration of classical works in the early years of European printing.

*Tarjan gift:* Ms. Susanna Tarjan added to our collection of scores by Jerome Moross, a piece called "Eccentricities of Davy Crockett" from a larger work, *Ballet Ballads*.

*Ukrainian poetry gift:* Yuriy Tarnawsky and other members of the New York Group of Ukrainian Poets gave the archives of the organization to the Bakhmeteff Archive of Russian and Eastern European History and Culture of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Since the mid-1950s, the New York Group has published and promoted the

poetry of its members in the local area. A reading by some of these members took place in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library on April 12, 1995.

*Williams purchase:* Funds from a group of our dedicated endowments, in particular the Brander Matthews fund, enabled us to purchase a large group of letters, manuscripts, books, and other items from the estate of Tennessee Williams. Comprised of the contents of Williams' Key West home when he died, the new material promises to add significantly to the study and interpretation of the playwright's work. Included are heavily annotated works from Williams' library, with comments, analyses, poetry, and scraps of dialogue written on the endpages and flyleaves, and revised early drafts of a number of short stories, essays, and plays, e.g., *One Arm*, *A Screenplay*, *The Eccentricities of a Nightingale*, "Of My Father (A Belated Appreciation)," and "Some Philosophical Shop Talk"—the latter a 40-page essay on the theater. Among his many correspondents are Carson McCullers, Kathrerine Anne Porter, and Paul Bowles. Of particular interest are 24 paintings by Williams and his sister Rose.

*Yerushalmi gift:* Professor Yosef Yerushalmi added to our collection a manuscript collection of liturgical and other poetry in Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic from Aden, created in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. The collection of Hebrew manuscripts in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library is one of the most extensive in the country. Professor Yerushalmi's gift is a significant addition.

#### THE MUSIC LIBRARY

*Fritz Reiner Center gift:* The Fritz Reiner Center for Contemporary Music has given to the Music Library a collection of approximately eighty autographed letters and several photographs relating to important twentieth-century composers. Reiner, the eminent Hungarian-born American conductor who died in 1963, achieved the peak of his success as music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 1953 to 1962. Included are letters to him from Béla Bartók, Arnold Schoenberg, and Richard Strauss, as well as from students Leonard Bernstein and Lukas Foss. The collection has been added to the Music Library's deposit collection in the Butler Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

#### THE LAW LIBRARY

*Cohen gift:* After emigrating from England in 1928, Philip Cohen got his first job in the acquisitions department of the Law School Library, where he worked until 1942. Now, after a long career as a law book publisher and book dealer, Mr. Cohen has given a dozen English law books from the sixteenth century to the Library. His gift includes a yearbook from the reign of Edward III, Thomas Littleton's *Tenures*, William Lambard's *Eirenarcha: Office of the Justice of the Peace*, and two editions of William Staundefordes' *Les Plee del Coron*.

*Hazard gift:* John N. Hazard, Nash Professor Emeritus of Law and leading scholar of the Soviet legal system, completed a major gift of this research library to the Law School. The collection



includes many works on international law from a Soviet perspective, treaties from the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czarist statutes, legal textbooks by Soviet lawyers, constitutions of Soviet states, early editions of Soviet codes, and many Communist Party pamphlets and ephemeral Party material that Professor Hazard was able to acquire during extended travels within the U.S.S.R.

*Nizer bequest:* Best known for his book *My Life in Court*, Louis Nizer (B.A., 1922; LL.B., 1924) was also a vibrant lecturer and popular columnist. His personal papers, given to the Law Library after his death on November 10, 1994, are composed of transcripts of radio and television interviews, research files, published articles, scrapbooks, and material for his last book, *Catspaw*.

*Toobin gift:* Jeffrey Toobin's first assignment out of Harvard Law School was a place on the team of lawyers working for Special Prosecutor Lawrence Walsh to investigate the Iran-Contra affair. Toobin has given the Library forty-eight volumes of the trial transcript, including the indictment and pre-trial hearing. The trial, U.S. vs. Oliver North and John Poindexter, was held before District Judge Gerhard Gesell in the District of Columbia from January 1987 to May 1989.

#### THE HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARY

*Records of the dean's office:* In the summer of 1993, the Health Sciences Library acquired a major new collection: the records of the dean's office of the College of Physicians & Surgeons were transferred from the dean's office to the Library's Special Collections unit. This collection,

some 1,400 feet of records, contains material from ca 1903 to the present, and complements the archives of the College from 1807 to 1900, which were already held in the Health Sciences Library.

Included among the records are correspondence with P&S departments, committee minutes, student records, grant proposals, printed materials, and photographs relating to the school. These records are an extraordinary resource, not only for the history of P&S but also for the study of medical education. Departmental records, for example, often include substantive discussions about the development of the department, thus illustrating the development of the various specialties. In addition, files on faculty and students contain valuable information about some of the leading figures in the health sciences.

The Health Sciences Library plans a strong and proactive approach to the preservation and management of this collection. Programs for processing the collection are being developed; policies are being formulated regarding record retention and restrictions on use; and a survey is being planned to determine long-term preservation needs, including microfilming and digitization. A key task is to make the collection known and accessible to scholars and researchers. To this end, finding aids will be created to assist users in learning what is in the collection and in requesting materials from the files. When completed, these will be mounted on CPMCnet, the Medical Center's information service, and will be accessible to scholars worldwide through the Internet.

The development of archives for the Health Sciences campus is a new and significant initiative for the Health Sciences Library. With the acquisition of the P&S records, the keystone of this col-

lection is in place. Records of other departments, schools, and research centers, as well as the papers of individual faculty and researchers further enrich the collection. With this acquisition, the Health Sciences Library reinforces its commitment to building and preserving a comprehensive collection of primary source material documenting the history of medicine and medical education at the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center.

#### THE ELECTRONIC TEXT SERVICE

During the past year, the collections of the Electronic Text Service have been strengthened by a number of important new holdings. As in the past, the fields of classics and medieval studies continue to be leading areas of growth—a reflection, no doubt, of the relatively well-defined nature of the corpus of textual materials available for use by scholars in these disciplines. Considerably expanded versions of two of the department's most heavily used resources—the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* collection of classical Greek literature and the CETEDOC *Library of Christian Latin Texts*—were acquired, enhancing the already great value of these research tools. (The CETEDOC collection has proven useful on several occasions in identifying manuscripts and manuscript fragments in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library's Plimpton collection in the course of a special project now under way to catalog those materials.) Two outstanding new purchases are Chadwyck-Healy's electronic edition of Migne's 217-volume *Patrologia Latina* (of which approximately 100 volumes have been completed in electronic format thus far) and Brepols' *In*

*Principio*, an extensive database of manuscript incipits based on the card indexes of the Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes in Paris. Further additions expected in the near future include the Admyte database of Spanish medieval manuscripts, a collection of Roman law, a collection of Latin inscriptions, a dictionary of medieval Latin abbreviations, a database of Latin sources from Celtic lands, and an electronic version of Paul Oskar Kristeller's *Iter Italicum*.

The ETS holdings in the field of modern literature have also grown considerably. The single most spectacular addition here is the Chadwyck-Healy poetry database, a collection comprising the works of 1,350 English poets from 660 to 1900. A full-text database of English verse drama and another of Afro-American poetry from the same publisher have also been acquired. Other items of interest include *Lettatura Italiana Zanichelli*, a set of 362 Italian literary texts, smaller collections of English and Spanish-American poetry, and a selection of modern hypertextual fiction.

The field of modern historical studies, heretofore not as well covered at the ETS, has been augmented by some important new holdings. Of considerable value for American studies is the recently received electronic version of the multi-volume *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, with texts of the major documents of American chief executives from Washington through Taft published by the CDEX Information Group; the collection will soon be joined by a CD-ROM edition of the *Public Papers of the Presidents* by the same publisher. The ETS holdings of the leading American colonial newspaper, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, a heavily used resource, have continued to grow. New material of this type includes on-disk collec-

tions of American Civil War newspaper reporting and historic articles from the *Times* of London. Finally, the Library has recently received a full-text version of the published proceedings of the Nuremberg Tribunal.

Religion and philosophy continue to be areas of growth. Significant items recently received or expected in the near future include the Soncino *Talmud*, the Pali canon of Buddhist scriptures, a collection of Islamic law, and works of Nietzsche and Spinoza.

The collection of the Electronic Text Service has also grown in terms of expanded access to the local and national library community. Thanks to an ongoing Title II-C grant, it has proven possible to list most of the major collections and many records for individual titles within them on CLIO, the Libraries' online catalog. (At present, analytic online records are being produced for the important collection of classical Latin authors produced by the Packard Humanities Institute.) In addition, work is currently under way to make a number of texts available to Columbia users over the campus network. The *Oxford English Dictionary* is now available for searching and browsing, and a significant portion of the classics of political and economic thought contained in the InteleX Corporation's *Past Masters* collection should be available very shortly. As this process becomes more streamlined, an increasing proportion of the ETS collections is expected to become available in this way, joining the broader stream of material planned for inclusion in Columbia's Digital Library.

#### THE C. V. STARR EAST ASIAN LIBRARY

*Meiji Era Collection on Microfilm:* The Maruzen Publishing Company of Japan has entrusted the C. V. Starr East Asian Library with 8,204 reels of microfilm of the National Diet Library Collection of Books Printed in the Meiji Era (Microfilm Set). Starr's holdings, valued at over one million dollars and comprising more than half the total set, include all materials in the following categories: philosophy; religion; history; political and foreign affairs; society and its problems; economy and industry; statistics; education; performing arts; arts and crafts; literature; and general records, index, journals, collections. The microfilm cassettes and a dedicated Minolta 605Z Reader-Printer are housed in the microform room on the 100 level of Starr Library.

The National Diet Library collection of Meiji Era (1868–1912) books represents more than 70 percent of all material published in Japan during the most important period of its modernization. The entire microfilm set consists of 15,536 reels, printed indices, and a CD-ROM catalog, which can be searched in a variety of ways including author, title, publisher, key word, and date.

In 1994 Starr Library received a donation of approximately \$20,000 from the Sumitomo Marine and Fire Insurance Company, through the Japan Foundation, to acquire the CD-ROM index to the microfilm set, the necessary hardware and software to run it, and a printer. These were installed in the reference area of the reading room on the 300 level.

Over the next several years, Starr Library hopes to raise funds to acquire the remaining 7,322 reels in the following categories to complete the set:

biography and genealogy; geography and local customs; law; military affairs; natural sciences and math; medicine; agronomy and agriculture; engineering; home economics and domestic arts; athletics and martial arts; language; children's books; and Western language text.

#### THE AVERY LIBRARY

*New-York Historical Society auction purchase:* By preemptive bid, Avery Library purchased three items from the New-York Historical Society at auction at Christie's in New York. The items add significantly to Avery's holdings on the New York architect Alexander Jackson Davis. Two small drawings of New York City scenes, the Rutgers Medical College and the St. John's Burying Ground, were purchased for the Drawings and Archives collection. A rare volume of lithographs of early New York City architecture—*Views of the*

*Public Building in the City of New York*, published by Anthony Imbert, ca 1830 and featuring lithographs by A. J. Davis—was acquired for Avery's Rare Book collection. The purchase was supported in part by a generous donation from Jane Davies, noted Davis scholar and former rare book cataloger at Columbia University Libraries.

*Platt, Wyckoff and Coles gift:* The Library also received, from the firm of Platt, Wyckoff and Coles, additional files from the firm and its predecessors. The firm was founded by architect Charles A. Platt, continued with his sons William and Geoffrey Platt, and later became Platt, Wyckoff and Coles. The latest gift of ca 8,200 drawings and other office files has been added to the first gift of the Platt archive, ca 3,500 drawings given in 1974, and a smaller gift in 1991. The present gift includes material from all of the firms. An exhibition on the work of Charles Platt, to which the Avery Library is a major lender, is currently on display at the Hood Museum, Dartmouth College.





## *Contributors to This Issue*

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia. He has been awarded Guggenheim and Spencer Fellowships in the coming year for his work on a biography of Nicholas Murray Butler.

BARRY BERGDOLL is Associate Professor of Art History at Columbia and is currently at work on a study of the use of photographs in the nineteenth-century architectural office. He is also working in cooperation with Janet Parks, Curator of Drawings at the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, on an exhibition celebrating the bicentennial of the Morningside Heights campus.

HOLLIE HASWELL is Curator of the Columbiana Collection and Advisor to the University's Archives and Records Management Program.

JOHN B. STRANGES (Ph.D., 1970) served as Vice President of Academic Affairs at Niagara University, Lewiston, New York, from 1977 to 1994, when he was appointed the institution's first University Professor.

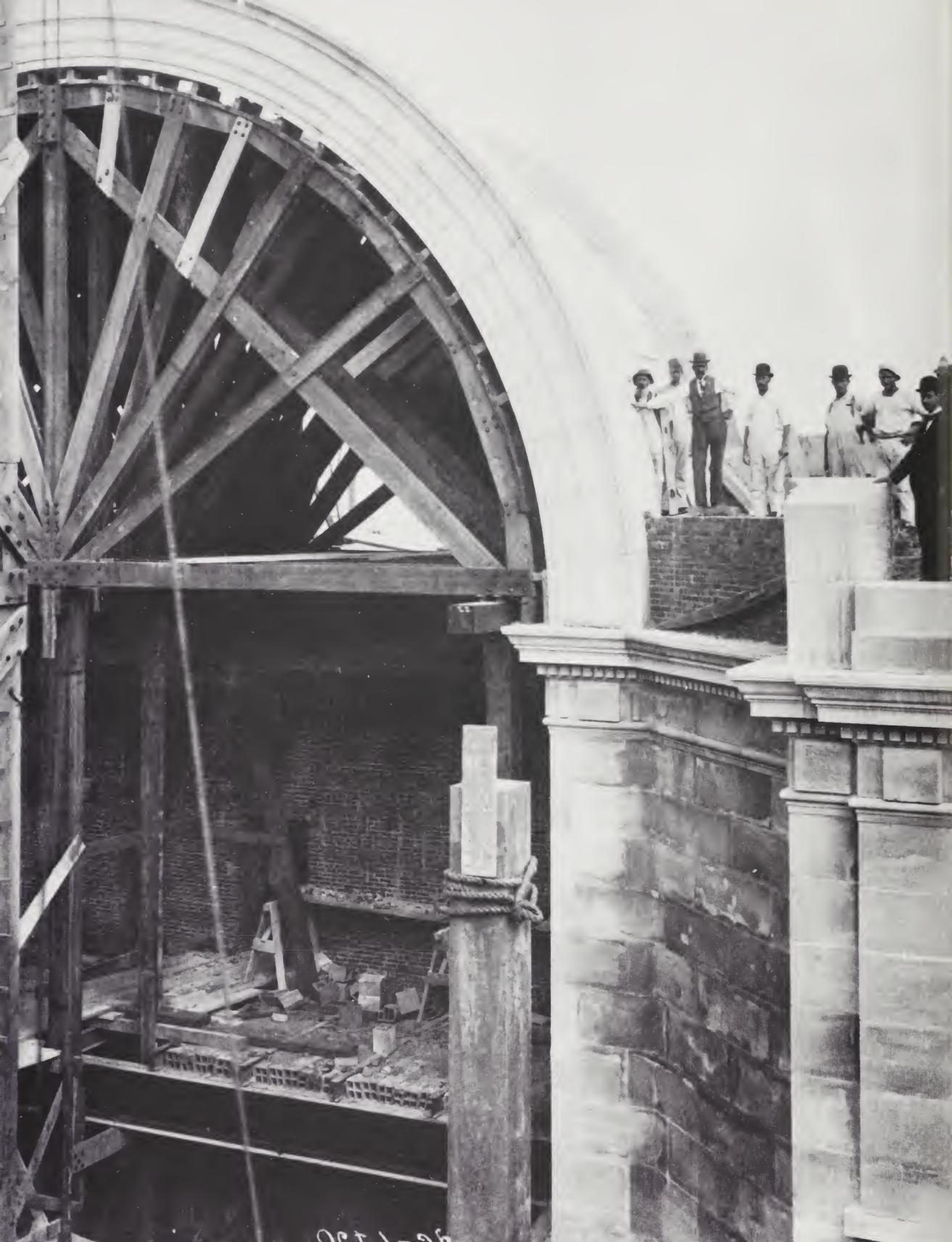
## *In Memoriam*

CORLISS LAMONT, a teacher, philosopher, and author who generously supported the Columbia University Libraries for many years, died in his home in Ossining, New York, on April 27, 1995. Dr. Lamont became a Friend of the Libraries in 1952 and remained an active member until his death. A widely respected scholar and an eager defender of civil liberties, he was the author of many books, including *Russia Day by Day* (1933), *The Illusion of Immortality* (1935), *The Peoples of the Soviet Union* (1946), and *The Philosophy of Humanism* (1949). In 1974, he was honored by the Friends for his establishment of major research collections in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, including writings by George Santayana and John Masfield and art by Rockwell Kent. He established a chair in civil liberties at the Columbia University Law School in 1982 and in 1986 donated funds for the newly created Corliss Lamont Reading Room in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Dr. Lamont was a gracious and courageous friend whose presence will be sorely missed.



## *In Memoriam*

PAULINE AMES PLIMPTON, a longtime Friend and frequent donor to the Columbia University Libraries, died at the age of 93 on April 15, 1995. Mrs. Plimpton, the daughter-in-law of George Arthur Plimpton whose generous gift of books and manuscripts to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library in 1936 greatly enriched Columbia's collection of early books and manuscripts, was a literary figure in her own right. The last of her eight books of family history and biography, *A Collector's Recollections, George Arthur Plimpton*, was published by the Columbia University Libraries in 1993. The widow of Ambassador Francis T. P. Plimpton, who was also a Friend of the Libraries, Mrs. Plimpton had most recently made a generous gift to provide the matching funds required by the National Endowment for the Humanities for completion of its grant to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. This grant is for the creation of a detailed catalog of the Library's collection of more than 800 medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, many of which were part of the original Plimpton gift.





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